



**Justin P. Wilson, Comptroller**

September 6, 2016

## **Marshall County Solid Waste Department Hires Incarcerated Felon**

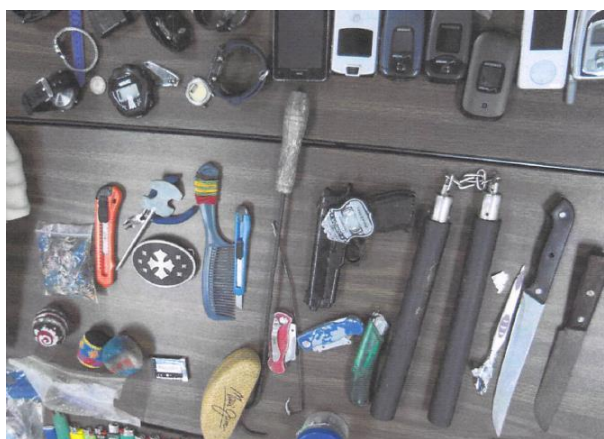
*Inmates Also Accessed Contraband and Worked on Private Property*

An investigation by the Tennessee Comptroller's Office has found numerous problems with the way inmate labor was handled within the Marshall County Solid Waste and Sheriff's Departments. Marshall County allowed jail inmates to work at the county's solid waste facility in Lewisburg.

Investigators determined the solid waste director hired an incarcerated felon as a full-time county employee at \$12.46 per hour. He received the same employee benefits as other county employees including health insurance, retirement, and sick leave. The inmate was paid a total of \$12,444.43 by the county.



The same inmate also performed seven days of work at the solid waste director's privately owned farm. At times, the inmate was left alone on the farm. Investigators noted the inmate was falsely signed out from the jail to work at the solid waste facility. The solid waste director also admitted to using inmates to deliver, set-up, and take-down equipment for local nonprofits. The director also used inmates to decorate his church for Christmas.



Comptroller investigators also found that inmates working at the solid waste facility were not properly supervised. This led to workers scavenging and hiding alcohol, drugs, tobacco products, cell phones, weapons, pornography, and other contraband items within the facility.

The Marshall County Sheriff discontinued the inmate work release program on January 15, 2016.

The Comptroller's 19-page investigative report includes 11 different findings, all of which have been reviewed with the district attorney general for the 17<sup>th</sup> Judicial District.

"This investigation raises numerous concerns including several instances where inmates were unsupervised or not accurately signed out for work," said Comptroller Justin P. Wilson. "While inmate work programs can be beneficial, it is important basic safeguards are put in place."

To view the investigation online, go to: <http://www.comptroller.tn.gov/ia/>

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